



The Phoenix Family Readiness Group Newsletter  
1<sup>st</sup> Special Troops Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (M)  
Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07



Issue 24 ~ 1-15 September 2006

We are halfway through September and the temperature has begun to drop off to the low 100s. The nights are really cooling off with temperatures into the 70's. In this issue you will hear from the Company 1SGs as they highlight the accomplishments of their Companies and Soldiers. You will also hear from the HHC Support Platoon and the CBRN Platoon. Alpha company will also highlight their headquarters section. Finally, you will hear about Bravo Company's Volleyball team.

## RENEGADES

### Staying Focused

*By 1SG Ramon Apolinario, HHD 1SG*

Greetings family and friends of the HHD Renegades. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you. Your support, love, mail and all you do for our Soldiers is important.

The weather is starting to change; it is getting cooler in the morning. This makes running a little more bearable. The days are not as hot, 105 vs. 118 degrees; yes, it does make a difference! As we get closer to going home, our Soldiers have not lost their focus of the tasks at hand. During my walk and talk, as I call it, I gauge the Soldier's state of readiness. I talk with them about what their plans are when we return. They talk about spending time with family, friends, schools they plan to attend, etc. I see the shine in their eyes during our

conversations. After talking to them, I always remind them, as I do myself, to stay focused on the mission.

As a veteran of 3 Operations and 2 major deployments, I understand the stress families go through. The stress of deployment affects family, friends, single and married soldiers in different ways. We as Soldiers are required to attend reintegration training. This enables the Soldier to cope with the changes in their lives upon redeployment. You, as family members, can start your own reintegration process. There are different agencies that are available to assist you. Some of them are the Chaplains, Army Community Services, Army Family Team Building center and of course the FRG.

One final note I would like to address. As a First Sergeant I do everything within my power to keep my Soldiers safe. I would like to enlist your help as friends and family in this endeavor. I am the first line of defense, as to safety. I would like you to be my second line of defense. We lose entirely too many soldiers to drinking and driving and motorcycle accidents back at home station. This is especially true after redeployments, I ask you to help me keep our Soldiers safe.

Once again thank you for your love and support.

RENEGADE 7 OUT

## HURRICANE

### CBRN PLATOON

*By 1LT Gabe Cedillo, Platoon Leader*

The month of September brings many changes to the Chemical and Task Force Iron Claw (TFIC) section. SPC Mayse (now wearing Specialist rank after being promoted at the beginning of the month) has been on the TFIC team since January, and serves as the primary night Husky driver. The team says goodbye to SPC Schaeffer, who was one of the original members of the team. He served as the primary Husky driver during daytime route clearance missions. He is now with the Company Operations Section. Even though he is no longer on the team he will always have a place with the Task Force Iron Claw. We welcomed many new members to the team coming from Bravo Company and others coming from tower guard operations. SPC Renteria and PFC Talton from Bravo Company will be joining the route clearing night team after working on the Satellite systems for Brigade during the past six months. PVT Smith, now off tower guard, assists Dan O'Connor, our Chemical Maintenance Tech to keep our Chemical FOX Recon vehicles fully mission capable. PVT Thummel is also coming from tower guard and has joined the daytime route clearing team.

### SUPPORT PLATOON

*By 1LT Demario Grover, Platoon Leader*

The Support platoon has been very busy this past month with the platoon's recent change of mission. The support platoon, already consisting of cooks, fuelers, truck drivers, light wheel and track mechanics, along with generator and small arms repair mechanics, has added a new section. The platoon now has the support of the Bradley fighting team and parts of the NBC platoon originally belonging to 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon, "OutKast". This addition to the platoon plays a big role in its main mission, to secure Civil Affair Teams all across the brigade's area of operations. In the past few weeks the platoon has been doing a variety of missions. They include providing area security for medical operations (MEDOPS), interacting with the local population, and providing security so the Civil Affair teams can assess the progress of local projects.

I'd also like to recognize some individual achievements of the platoon's Soldiers. Congratulations to the following soldiers: SSG Garcia promotion to Staff Sergeant effective 1 AUG 06 and SPC Amezcua for winning the Soldier of the Month board for September.



SSG Garcia pulls security while the CA Team talks to local area officials about area projects.

## NIGHTHAWKS

### ALPHA COMPANY

*By ISG Ryan Welch, A CO ISG*

Greetings from Iraq, As we enter the 10<sup>th</sup> month of the deployment, the Nighthawks remain disciplined and focused to finish the mission strong. The Alpha Company Soldiers are performing exceptionally well. I am very proud of their achievements and the effort each puts forth. I would like to take a moment to spotlight four specific NCOs that continue to influence and motivate the large majority of Alpha Company Soldiers in that effort.



**SFC Walden**  
**Headquarters PSG**

**SSG Youngblood**  
**Prophet PSG**



**SGT Magoon**  
**HUMINT PSG**

**SFC Thompson**  
**TUAV PSG**

The four NCOs I am referring to are the Alpha Company Platoon Sergeants. SFC Walden leads the Headquarters Platoon comprised of the orderly room, arms room, and supply sections, the Common Ground Station section, the Trojan SPIRIT Lite Section, the Intelligence & Electronic Warfare Maintenance section, and one Soldier who works at the motorpool. SSG Youngblood leads a small crew of SIGINT (Signals Intelligence) professionals in the Prophet Platoon. SGT Magoon recently completed a short tenure supporting the Phoenix

Battalion's Task Force Ironclaw mission but he is quickly getting back into the groove with his HUMINT (Human Intelligence) Platoon. SFC Thompson's TUAV (Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) Platoon continues to work to set a record number of hours flown.

The Alpha Company mission is to provide military intelligence support to the Raider Brigade and subordinate battalions. Much of our Soldiers' ability to contribute toward the mission comes from the Platoon Sergeants' role – keeping our Soldiers focused, tactically and technically proficient, and enforcing the standards.

The four Platoon Sergeants arrived in Iraq with many junior Soldiers. Today you would be impressed at the maturity level and discipline our Soldiers demonstrate as well as the great quality of work our Soldiers produce under arduous conditions. It is very rewarding to see the professional development process evolve as some of our Soldiers get promoted and take a more active role and greater responsibilities on a daily basis.

The Platoon Sergeants continue to ensure the Nighthawks keep current on training, weapons qualifications, and operate safely in their duties. The Platoon Sergeants lead, guide, mentor, and train the Soldiers to perform in all aspects of our duties in Iraq. We, as a Company, are able to stay ahead of the tasks at hand because of the four Platoon Sergeants direct and involved leadership. Many of their leader checks involve: maintenance, equipment inventories, room inspections, physical fitness, counseling's, training, police call areas, logistical and supply issues, and any area involving Soldiers. I commend the Platoon Sergeants for their ability to get

the job done in an expeditious fashion. Whether it is your son/daughter, husband/wife, or brother/sister, our Soldiers are working hard and being taken care of with the good leadership their Platoon Sergeants provide.

I would like to thank the Alpha Company Soldiers and the Platoon Sergeants for their contributions during Operation Iraqi Freedom. A special thanks to all the family and friends who have shown such great support throughout the deployment. As we begin to plan our return back to Fort Hood, we will continue to remain focused and disciplined for a safe return soon.

Ryan D. Welch  
Alpha Company First Sergeant

### **A CO HEADQUARTERS SECTION** *By CPT Clayton Finch, A Co XO*

Hi, I am CPT Clayton Finch, the new Executive Officer of Alpha Company. As a former Nighthawk Prophet Platoon Leader, it's great to be experiencing a different aspect of the Nighthawk's Mission. The Headquarters Platoon is extremely dynamic and diverse. They continue to provide



**CPT Clayton Finch**

excellent support to the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade. This week I'd like to focus on the men and women of the Company Headquarters Section. The Headquarters Section of the Headquarters

Platoon has been a powerhouse of late. The dedicated work that your Soldiers put in has enabled Alpha Company to

operate seamlessly, especially during the busy change of command season. A lot of what the headquarters section does is transparent to the Soldiers at large, but their hard work

around the clock makes every bit of difference. Mail distribution, arms room upkeep, change of command book keeping, supply runs, equipment issue and communications are just some of the feats that this small section of four Soldiers embraces each day. I'd like to point out a few highlights in the recent weeks.



**SSG Tawana Herring**



**PFC Meghan Keller**

The mission of Alpha Company would not be possible without the dedicated service that the Headquarters section Soldiers provide. SSG Herring, from Talladega,

Alabama, leads the way as the Company Supply Sergeant, Nuclear/Biological/Chemical (NBC) NCO, Communications NCO and soon to be Equal Opportunity Representative for the company. SSG Herring enjoys spending time with her son Antius and the occasional card game with friends. PFC Chatterton, out of Victoria, Texas,



and PFC Keller, from Wichita, Kansas, keep the daily battle rhythm of the company moving by maintaining the company Orderly Room and communications with higher headquarters. PFC Chatterton



**PFC Eric Chatterton**

hones his carpentry skills in his free time or kicks back with a XBOX 360 game of choice. PFC Keller likes to read a good book in her spare time or watch a movie with friends. PFC McDowell, who hails from the Bronx, New York, runs the Company Arms Room as the Primary Armorer, handles supply issues as the Supply Clerk, and also performs duties in the Company Orderly Room on a daily basis. PFC McDowell takes time out to work on her singing and dancing whenever the opportunity presents itself.

The last couple of months have been quite busy with the change of command, planning for the return home, and large supply



**PFC Unique McDowell**

runs to get the Soldiers in Alpha Company the best equipment and

clothing available. The Headquarters Soldiers mentioned above have not only met these challenges head-on, they have excelled with minimal oversight or direction. The tasks they are given are not easy, but they make it seem simple, day in and day out. New boots, new uniforms, serviced combat equipment, and all of your packages arriving in your Soldiers' hands are products of the Headquarters Section.

The next couple of months will continue to be busy, but the Headquarters Section will succeed with any task and look forward to finishing the year strong. They are excited about preparing for our return and send out their best wishes to all the loved ones back home!

## **EAGLES**

### **BATTLE READY BRAVO**

*By 1SG Scott Guillory, B Co 1SG*

The highly technical Soldiers of Bravo Company are well known throughout the Multi-National Division-Baghdad (MND-B) for their ability to provide flawless communication within the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team's area of operation. They play a vital role in the overall success of the mission by providing command and control capabilities to the maneuver units throughout our area of operations.

What is not so widely known are the extreme combat skills that these same soldiers possess. Bravo Company has been tasked with several missions that place them outside the signal "bubble" and in direct contact with the enemy. These missions include the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Security Team, securing the Civil Affairs (CA)

teams, and the Battalion Commander's Personal Security Detail (PSD). Bravo Soldiers also support the route clearance mission, which clears roadways of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). Though these duties are more hazardous than their everyday mission, the small signal company took on the challenge and has performed exceptionally well.

All the soldiers of Bravo Company have done an outstanding job during this deployment. But there are select individuals that deserve special recognition because of their flexibility and personal courage in support of the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Troops Battalion and 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team. CPL Denker, PFC Adamson, and SPC Vickers have done a remarkable job on the EOD and CA security teams. These troops are in harms way daily and have done so in a safe and exemplary manner. SPC Griffin, SPC Blakley, and SPC Birk have provided personal security for the battalion command team and are responsible for their safety when they are away from the camp. They are the eyes and ears of the Battalion Commander when traveling in our area of operations. PFC Talton and SPC Renteria, are our first line of defense for countering IEDs. They conduct route clearance searching for buried IEDs.. Last but not least, we have the brigade "Tiger Team" led by 2LT McMillen and SGT Martinez. They have the rigorous duty of traveling to all of the signal sites in 1BCT's area of operations and provide maintenance support on signal equipment. SPC Everman, SPC Patenode, SPC Berry, and a host of the Bravo Company Soldiers are highly dedicated to this mission.

These are just a few examples of how Signal Soldiers are putting aside their

radios and computers to take up arms and show that they are battle ready and combat proven.

-Eagle 7

## **BRAVO VOLLEYBALL TEAM**

*By 2LT Ronald Carter*

As the deployment in Iraq continues and Bravo Company manages one of the largest communication and information networks in theater, the soldiers find different ways to cope with the stress of being away from their family and loved ones and working long hours. One activity is participating in team sports. Competing in team sports relieves stress and builds unit cohesion. Bravo Company's volleyball team is a perfect example.

Bravo's team consists of W01 Collins, SGT Garcia, SGT Butler, SPC Aponte, and SGT Whitesides. Each member serves a vital role in the success of Bravo Company's overall mission. They all work at least 12 hour days and have very little time to themselves. However, they have made time to hit the sandy volleyball courts of Camp Taji, Iraq.

The team has recently competed in their first tournament. They won their first game but lost the second game.



Bravo's Volleyball team practicing for their next competition.

Though they did not bring home the 1<sup>st</sup> place trophy, they were able to relieve some stress and promote unit cohesion. The volleyball team not only raises the morale of the players but the unit as a

whole. Many of Bravo company soldiers enjoy going out and cheering on their fellow Eagles. The volleyball team is practicing and looking forward to their next competition.



## To Dare Is To Do

**Larry A. Seaman**  
**Command Sergeant Major**  
**U.S. Army**

**John W. Cross**  
**LTC, EN**  
**Commanding**